
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 8

Approved

SOURCE:

COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER:

**World Organization for Animal Health Definition of
“Poultry”**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The intent of defining “poultry” and “non-poultry” is to specify the classes of birds that are at risk to enter into international/export markets. There have been multiple cases where birds infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza have impacted trade even though they represent no risk of entering an export market. This resolution refines the definition of “poultry” to prevent inclusion of birds that are not at risk to enter international trade.

Currently, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) defines “poultry” to mean “all birds reared or kept in captivity for the production of any commercial animal products or for breeding for this purpose, fighting cocks used for any purpose, and all birds used for restocking supplies of game or for breeding for this purpose, until they are released from captivity.” This definition of “poultry” caused export disruption of chicken and turkey products from the state of Texas after hunting preserve pheasants were diagnosed and reported as infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza.

There have also been multiple cases of birds being classified as “poultry” when the owners have given away small numbers of eggs to friends or neighbors. This is because the definition uses the wording “the products of which are used primarily within the same household **exclusively**”

United States (US) representatives to WOAH have proposed alternative wording to exclude this class of fowl from the definition of “poultry”. The US has one vote at WOAH and must garner support from other countries to obtain majority to attain a change, and so US poultry producers should be united in this endeavor.

The United States Animal Health Association should lend support to the proposed definition of “poultry” as follows, with edits to the current WOAH definition of “poultry”.

[continued]

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association supports the proposed changes to the definition of “poultry” by the United States representative to the World Organization for Animal Health.

POULTRY

means all birds reared or kept in captivity for the production of any commercial animal products or for breeding for this purpose, and fighting cocks used for any purpose, ~~and all birds used for restocking supplies of game or for breeding for this purpose, until they are released from captivity.~~

Birds that are kept in a single household, the products of which are used primarily within the same household ~~exclusively~~, are not considered *poultry*, provided that they have no direct or indirect contact with *poultry* or *poultry* facilities.

Birds that are kept in captivity for other reasons, including those that are kept for shows, racing, exhibitions, zoological collections, and competitions, ~~and companionship, pet birds, birds specifically raised for release,~~ and for breeding or selling for these purposes, ~~as well as pet birds,~~ are not considered *poultry*, provided that they have no direct or indirect contact with *poultry* or *poultry* facilities.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS submitted comments, a corresponding science-based rationale, and references to the WOAHA on multiple occasions proposing that the definition of *poultry* be further edited. The most recent U.S. comment, submitted in December 2022, requested the changes as proposed by USAHA in this resolution.

APHIS also collaborated with WOAHA Delegates in the Americas, the European Union, and other countries, to request a review of the *poultry* definition. Mounting scientific evidence demonstrates that certain birds (those used for restocking supplies of game raised for release or “backyard birds” kept in a single household with limited sales of meat or eggs) pose negligible risk to *poultry* or *poultry facilities*, and the current definition unnecessarily interrupted international trade of commercial *poultry* and *poultry* products. Although not necessarily in agreement on the definition changes needed, the previously mentioned parties unanimously agreed to support a request to WOAHA that the ad hoc group review the risk posed by these birds and consider amending the definition of *poultry* prior to WOAHA proposing it for adoption.

To date, APHIS has not received the Terrestrial Code Commission's report from its February 2023 meeting. However, APHIS is cautiously optimistic that WOAHP will accept the request and have the ad hoc group review the risk and amend the definition of *poultry*.